(a) whether Government have received representations for 100 per cent excise relief on diesel oil sold to the deep-sea fishing industy;

(b) what are the reasons for not granting this concession, in view of the financial problem the fishing industry is facing in Orissa;

(c) whether Government are aware of the fact that thousands of workers in Orissa are employed in marine fishing related industries; and

(d) what steps are being taken in this regard to assist the fishing industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EXPENDITURE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI B. K. GADHVI): (a) No, Sir. However, representations for abolition of excise duty on high speed diesel oil for use by small fishermen have been received by the Government.

(b) Deep-sea fishing trawlers approved as 100 per cent export-oriented units are eligible for complete exemption from excise duty on diesel oil used by such trawlers. High speed diesel oil used in other deep-sea fishing vessels, which are not less than 13.7 metres in length and using motors not less than 150 BHP is chargeable at 50 per cent of the normal excise duty. Full exemption from excise duty can be claimed in such cases, if proof of export of shrimp at the rate of 1 tonne for every 1.08 kilo-litre of diesel used is produced. No further concession is considered necessary for the deep sea fishing trawlers.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) During the Seventh plan, it is proposed to motorise 300 traditional crafts in Orissa. It is also proposed to introduce 40 Beach Landing Craft in Orissa with 50 per cent Central grant and 45 per cent loan from National Co-operative Development Corporation, the beneficiary Fishermen Cooperative Societies contributing only 5 per cent.

Supply of Yarn to Handloom Weavers

182. SHRI TALARI MANOHAR: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal to supply yarn to all the handloom weavers in the country at an uniform subsidised rate; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA): (a) and (b) The Central Government is considering a proposal for supply of hank yarn to State handloom agencies at subsidised prices to enable them to meet part of their requirement of yarn. The details of the scheme are being worked out.

Change in GNLF stand

183. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the GNLF activists headed by Shri Subash Ghising have changed the stand relating to Darjeeling issue in spite of the clear undertaking given by him that he would agree to the proposed Hill Development Council and withdraw the agitation; and

(b) whether Government are taking steps to bring the GNLF activists and the West Bengal Government to the negotiating table to settle the dispute?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) The Government have seen press reports indicating that Shri Subash Ghising will not participate in further discussions relating to the proposed Hill Development Council. Efforts will continue to find a peaceful settlement to the issues.

Appointment of Chairman of STC

184. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state·

(a) whether it is a fact that the State Trading Corporation is without a Chairman for the last two years; and